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Message Text

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53
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 IO-13 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01 NIC-01

RSR-01 /103 W
---------- 129735
R 031121Z AUG 73
FM USMISSION BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2182
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, GE
SUBJECT: DEATH OF WALTER ULBRICHT

REFA) BERLIN A-162; B) BERLIN 1312

1. ENTIRE BLACK-BORDERED FRONT PAGE OF AUGUST 2 NEUES
DEUTSCHLAND (ND) DEVOTED TO HOTO AND OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS
CONNECTED WITH DEATH OF GDR HEAD OF STATE WALTER ULBRICHT (REF B).
ONE INISE ND PAGE CONTAINED SOME NON-CONTROVIERSIAL POST-
WAR PHOTOS. OBITUARY IN NAME OF SED, GDR GOVERNMENT AND NATIONAL
FRONT, PRAISED, AS AT TIME OF ULBRICHT'S 80TH BIRTHDAY (REF A),
HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO GDR FOUNDING BUT AVOIDED ANY SPECIFIC
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MENTION OF HIS POLICIES AS SED FIRST SECRETARY AND CHAIRMAN

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GDR COUNCIL OF STATE. (OBIT LIMITS HIM TO HAVING HAD "SIGNIFICANT SHARE"--WESENTLICHER ANTEIL--IN DEVELOPING SOCIALISM IN GDR.)

2. ACCORDING ND, ONLY ONE DAY--AUGUST 7--OF OFFICIAL MOURNING WILL BE OBSERVED. PUBLIC VIEWING OF CATAFALQUE IN COUNCIL OF STATE BUILDING WILL BE LIMITED TO THREE HOURS AT MID-DAY. STATE FUNERAL, CREMATION, AND BURIAL ARE SCHEDULED FOR SAME AFTERNOON. FLAGS IN FRONT OF COUNCIL OF STATE AND PARTY HEADQUARTERS BUILDINGS ARE ALREADY FLYING AT HALF MAST ALTHOUGH ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTERIOR MINISTER, PUBLISHED IN ND, IMPLIED THAT FLAGS WERE TO BE LOWERED ONLY ON DAY OF STATE MOURNING. WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL WILL CONTINUE AS PLANNED. SED POLITBURO MEMBER HEMANN AXEN ANNOUNCED TO WYF COMMISSION ULBRICHT'S ALLEGED FINAL WISH THAT SHOW GO ON.

3. SENAT HAS INFORMED MISSION THAT IT PLANS TO MAKE NO STATEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH ULBRICHT'S DEMISE, LEAVING ANY STATEMENT TO BONN.

4. WE ANTICIPATE THAT VOLKSKAMMER WILL MEET IN NEAR FUTURE TO OFFICIALLY CONFIRM SED NOMINATION OF ULBRICHT'S SUCCESSOR.

5. COMMENT. GDR HANDLING OF ULBRICHT DEATH IS CONSISTENT WITH RECENT TREATMENT OF HIM AS HISTORICAL FIGURE WHO DESERVES RESPECT FOR HIS PAST SERVICES TO GDR. WHEN CONTRASTED WITH NERVOUSNESS OF SOVIET HIERARCHY EVEN TO ACKNOWLEDGE KHRUSHCHEV DEATH, HOWEVER, GDR OBSEQUIES FOR ULBRICHT ARE PERHAPS MEASURE OF CONFIDENCE OF PRESENT GDR HIERARCHY. WE MIGHT ALSO NOTE THAT RECEIPT OF SOVIET MESSAGE CONDOLENCE, WHICH ONE WOULD HAVE EXPECTED TO BE PRINTED CONCURRENTLY WITH OFFICIAL DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT, HAS YET TO BE REPORTED BY GDR MEDIA.BORG

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